


~~11827~~
Conf
Pam
90
#36

Duke University Libraries
An appeal to th
Conf Pam q#36
D990792654


An Appeal to the People of Alabama.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,

Montgomery, Alabama, Dec. 22d, 1862.

In view of the anticipated effect of the Conscription law upon the militia system of the State, on the 12th day of May last I invited the able-bodied men of Alabama, not subject to conscription, to form volunteer Companies. That invitation did not receive the attention it merited. The Legislature has adopted no law for the improvement of the militia organization of the State. The impaired condition of that system leaves no means of making the remaining military strength of the State available for its protection and defense except by the formation of volunteer Companies.

The State is now threatened from several directions. Our unscrupulous foe has collected all his resources for one stupendous effort to subjugate and enslave us. He can never repeat the effort. He makes it the crisis of his cause. If foiled in this last desperate struggle, exhausted and dispirited he must yield the contest. Our brave people may congratulate themselves upon the opportunity to hasten the achievement of peace and independence, by an exhibition of the fortitude and courage necessary to defeat the enemy in this last great and convulsive effort. The ultimate triumph of our glorious cause is now clearer than it has ever been. There is no reason for despondency. Our people will not shrink in this their final trial. The splendid victory at Fredericksburg will be followed by still more decisive results upon other fields. By repeated shocks the enemy's vastly accumulated power will be broken. At no distant day we shall enjoy, in the blessings of peace and good government, a reward for all our suffering. Alabama must be true to herself and do her duty in the emergency. She must be ready to meet and quell the domestic and social disturbances which may spring up as the tide of war approaches; to resist hostile raids; to protect her people and their property in any assailed quarter; to give death to every wanderer from the lines of our invading army, and if need be to increase the strength of the Confederate forces fighting upon our soil in its defense. For the accomplishment of these objects she looks, and can only look, to the voluntary movement of a patriotic people—too brave to suffer their cities and towns to be sacked, their homes to be desecrated, and their country to be desolated without striking a manly blow in their defense. I therefore call again upon the men and youths of the State, exempted from the service of the Confederate States by reason of their age or other cause, who are capable of bearing arms, to speedily organize themselves into Companies to constitute a reserved force, subject to service in this State upon the call of the Executive. They will be called into service only when necessity requires it. Their services may never be needed, but it is the part of wisdom and manly courage to be ready. It is the part of folly and cowardice to wait until the enemy's foot is upon our soil, and his muskets gleam in the hands of brutal soldiers at our doors. Shall I call in vain upon Alabamians to prepare to stand and fight upon their own soil in its defense? Alabama has given freely of her sons to our country's cause, but her warlike strength is not yet exhausted. I send to her people my warning, and I leave it for them to decide whether in the hour of trial, which may be before us, they will be ready with as much of the remaining military strength of the State as may be required.

People of Alabama! I must appeal to you for your aid to the Government in another matter. It is due to the great cause in which we are engaged, it is just to those now bravely enduring the trials and perils of actual war, that all within the ages prescribed by the act of Congress known as

the Conscrip't law, should be in the service. A considerable number of persons in every part of the State, both officers and privates, who belong to the army and are fit for duty, are lingering at home upon various pretexts, while their more manly and patriotic comrades, with ranks thinned and weakened by their absence, bear the shock of an unequal contest. So, too, a large number of persons subject to conscription are shrinking from the toils and perils which those of like age are bravely enduring, and hiding from the enrolling officer, to whom patriotism requires that they should promptly report themselves. Now when the last great struggle of the war is upon us; now when there is an opportunity to share in the closing triumphs of this great contest; now when our soldiers in the field, standing with fearless resolution amid sufferings and dangers, which would appall men less noble and brave, call upon those of like age with themselves for aid and relief; now when every strong right arm is needed to strike the quick and effective blows which are to give us peace, it is a shame and an iniquity that those two classes of persons should successfully evade the service they owe to their country. Every community owes it to its own reputation and to the country, to give no shelter to those who belong to the two classes above described, and to drive them, by the withering punishment of public scorn, to their proper places. I call upon all the officers, civil and military of the State, and upon all good and patriotic citizens, to give all their influence, personal or official, to constrain those persons into the path of duty and patriotism; and I especially invoke them to give their aid to the proper officers in arresting and coercing those who yield to no gentler means. It may be a disagreeable task, but the evil is great and ruinous to our country's cause, and it is the part of the patriot now to shrink from no task, however disagreeable or dangerous it may be, when the country calls. It is the pride of Alabama that her soldiers never falter upon the battle-field. Let us hope that none will be permitted to hide under cover of home from their appropriate duty.

I subjoin directions to guide in the formation of Companies under this proclamation :

1. Each Company must consist of not less than forty Privates, four Corporals, four Sergeants, two Lieutenants, and a Captain. When the number of Privates in a Company exceeds sixty, it shall be entitled to another Lieutenant. The Captain and Lieutenants will be elected by the Company, and the non-commissioned officers will be appointed by the Captain.
2. As soon as the requisite number of men have been enrolled, and the Company officers have been appointed, the Captain will make out the muster roll, showing the name, age and rank of every member of the Company, accompanied by the certificate of the commanding officer to the correctness of the roll. These muster rolls will be at once forwarded to Gen. H. P. Watson, Adjutant General of Alabama Militia, when the Company will be at once accepted into the service of the State.
3. The Companies thus formed will be subject to the order of the Governor, but will not be called into actual service, except in cases of urgent necessity, and then they will be employed only for purposes of local and State defense.
4. Each Company will provide its own arms as far as possible, and the deficiency will be supplied by the State, when the Company is called into actual service. Captains of Companies will be authorized to purchase all the powder and lead which can be procured in their respective neighborhoods, and upon properly certified vouchers the State will pay for the same, which will be retained for Company use, to be accounted for by Company commanders. It is earnestly hoped that every man in the State who has in his possession either arms or munitions which he is not able to use in the public service, will place them at the disposal of his neighbors who attach themselves to this organization.
5. It is not intended that this organization shall interfere with the business pursuits of the people, as the companies will only be called into service in cases of actual necessity; but for the purpose of acquiring some proficiency in drill, I request that in all our cities and large towns the business hours may be closed at 8 o'clock P. M., that the balance of the day may be devoted to drilling; and that companies organized in the country will drill as often as practicable, not to interfere too seriously with their industrial pursuits. Even should this arrangement occasion some inconvenience, the public safety requires it, and no good citizen will hesitate to adopt it.

6. All companies reported under this proclamation will be enrolled as part of the STATE GUARD. When called into service, they will be paid and subsisted by the State as other troops. Should it be thought necessary, the companies will be united into battalions and regiments, and in that event, the field officers will be appointed by the Governor.

7. All companies desiring to do so, may, by complying with its provisions, be regarded as an organization under the act of Congress of 18th October, 1862, a copy of which is appended to this proclamation. Companies desiring to be so organized should report to me.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, John Gill Shorter, Governor of the State of Alabama, have hereunto set my hand, and caused the Great Seal of the State to be affixed, this the 22d day of December, A. D. 1862, and of the Confederate States the second year.

JOHN GILL SHORTER,
Governor of Alabama.

BY THE GOVERNOR :

P. H. BRITTAN,
Secretary of State.

AN ACT

To authorize the formation of Volunteer Companies for Local Defense.

The Congress of the Confederate States do enact, That for the purpose of local defense in any portion of the Confederate States, any number of persons, not less than twenty, who are over the age of forty-five years, or otherwise not liable to military duty, may associate themselves as a military company, elect their own officers and establish rules and regulations for their own government, and shall be considered as belonging to the Provisional Army of the Confederate States, serving without pay or allowances, and entitled, when captured by the enemy, to all the privileges of prisoners of war: *Provided,* That such company shall, as soon as practicable, transmit their muster roll or a list of the names of the officers and privates to the Governor of the State, the commanding General of the department, or any Brigadier General in the State or Confederate service, to be forwarded to the Secretary of War; but the President or the commander of the Military District may, at any time, disband such companies: *Provided,* That in the States and Districts in which the acts entitled "an act to provide for the public defense," approved April 16th, 1862, and the acts amendatory thereof, have been suspended, persons of any age, resident within such States or Districts, may volunteer and form such companies so long as such suspension may continue: *Provided, however,* That no person shall become a member of said company until he shall have first taken the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America in writing, a copy of which shall be filed with the muster roll of said company as above prescribed.

Approved October 13, 1862.



Permalife.
pH 8.5